

TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS (TEYL)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE - E-TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS, AMERICAN ENGLISH INSTITUTE

Course Overview

English learners at the primary level (approximately ages five to ten) are cognitively primed to acquire language skills in ways that lend themselves to an integrated skills and content-based, experiential approach. The educator who understands the cognitive and social processes of second-language acquisition for TEYL is better equipped to help learners navigate the processes of classroom learning activities while also creating a fun, positive environment. In many cases, TEYL educators in English as a Foreign Language settings have a limited amount of time to accomplish their teaching goals and meet local requirements regarding the use of specific texts, tests, or other materials. A low-resource environment can also pose challenges. In this course, participants have the opportunity to explore solutions for such challenges through an overview of current research and best practices (always context-dependent) for TEYL, plus experimentation with a wide array of freely available online and local resources.

Special requirements: This course is for educators who work with young learners.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to

- identify, evaluate, and selectively apply a wide variety of stimulating and age-appropriate materials (e.g., read-along texts, audio, songs, video, hands-on manipulatives, games, puzzles, realia) to existing or new EFL curriculum, tailored to learners' needs and interests
- effectively apply strategies for both motivating and managing classroom-based language activities for young learners, with a tool set for rewarding desired student behaviors
- conduct a needs analysis, develop a learner profile, and then develop unit and lesson plans that would be appropriate for young learners in a specific local context. This may also include the amassing of a collection of new resources and materials for strategic application to the local TEYL-related context
- clearly articulate language-learning goals and appropriately aligned measures to be able to justify and evaluate any new approaches, activities, and materials applied to local contexts
- develop themselves professionally in the field of TEYL by participating in the new E-Teacher online networking community and preparing materials to share in their local community of peers, parents, and other professionals

Course Scope and Sequence

Week 1: Course introduction and orientation; ABCD (audience, behavior, condition, degree)¹ learning objectives and measures; defining TEYL in participants' local contexts plus the wider world

Week 2: Cognitive development of young learners and the pedagogical impact on their language-learning environment; materials and resource evaluation; motivating and management strategies (continued throughout the following weeks).

¹ ABCD Method, originally from Heinrich, Molenda, Russell, and Smaldino's *Instructional Media and Technologies for Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Merrill, 1996), as explained on the Penn State Learning Design Community Hub, ets.tlt.psu.edu/learningdesign/objectives/writingobjectives.

In the following weeks, participants form teams and—using templates, resource guides, and lots of creativity—lead the rest of the class in a round of resource and materials exploration and evaluation, discussions around content and the application of pedagogy in practical ways, finding solutions for local challenges, plus the creation and sharing of related lesson plans or local training plans. UO AEI faculty and guest speakers act as “guides on the side” to help structure and facilitate this process.

Week 3: Team A—Edutainment, gamification, making language learning fun. How are language learners motivated to learn, and what produces long-term results?

Week 4: Team B—Learning styles, differentiated instruction, universal design. “It’s not how smart you are, it’s how you are smart.” (Howard Gardner). How does this translate into a TEYL classroom?

Week 5: Team C—Language in context and content-based instruction. How can we structure “authentic” experiences for young learners and what outcomes can we expect?

Week 6: Team D—Learner feedback techniques and formative vs. summative assessment for young learners

Week 7: Team E—Survey of listening-speaking-vocabulary resources online and strategic applications in TEYL

Week 8: Team F—Survey of reading-writing-grammar (literacy) resources online and strategic applications in TEYL

Week 9: Team G—Teaching styles, administrative styles and local logistics. “. . . [G]rant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.” (Reinhold Neibuhr). As a reflective and long-range planning practitioner, how does this apply in my setting?

Week 10: Wrap-up: Feedback; reflection; sharing projects and action plans; forward planning

Course Requirements for Certificate of Completion

This class is pass/no pass. Participants receive a final score (maximum = 100 percent) at the end of the course. Participants with a final score of 70 percent or higher will pass the course.

Grading criteria for the course will be weighted as follows:

- Participation in asynchronous weekly discussions, including the posing of local challenges related to working with young learners and helping others find solutions to their challenges (30 percent of the total grade)
- Teamwork and leadership during the two-week period and topic of choice, including a reflective write-up on the two-week team planning, implementation process plus outcomes (40 percent)
- Final project plan (e.g., a collection of lesson plans, materials, resources, training materials) for local application. Must include timeline, roles and responsibilities of all who will be involved, and a clear set of goals plus measures (30 percent)

Sample Materials and Resources

- Articles from the *English Teaching Forum* journal, americanenglish.state.gov/english-teaching-forum
- *Bright Ideas*, stories and other materials for young learners from *American English*, americanenglish.state.gov
- *Jazz Chants*, video and teachers manual from ECA/A/L, americanenglish.state.gov/resources/teaching-jazz-chants-young-learners
- *U.S. NIEHS*, kids.niehs.nih.gov and kids.niehs.nih.gov/games/songs
- *EdPubs*, U.S. Department of Education, free online publications, <http://www.edpubs.gov>